

Working Notes

**TOWN OF ROCKY HILL
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE TOWN COUNCIL
MEETING OF MARCH 3, 2014**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairwoman Meg Casasanta called the March 3, 2014 Economic Development Subcommittee of the Town Council meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of Rocky Hill Town Hall, 761 Old Main Street, Rocky Hill, CT.

Those in attendance: Councilor Tim Moriarty, Councilor Cathy Vargas and David Schweitzer (Alternate). Also present were: Ray Carpentino (Economic Development Director), Marti Stiglich (Chairwoman of the Economic Development Commission), Mark Walworth (Vice Chairman of the Economic Development Commission) (Entered at 5:04 p.m.) and Christina Palmer (Executive Director of the Rocky Hill Chamber of Commerce)

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairwoman Meg Casasanta asked if there was anyone from the public who wished to speak this evening. Christina Palmer introduced herself and said she is the new Executive Director for the Rocky Hill Chamber of Commerce. Chairwoman Meg Casasanta congratulated Christina Palmer and welcomed her.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES AND WORKING NOTES

Councilor Cathy Vargas made a motion to approve the Minutes of the February 3, 2014 meeting of the Economic Development Subcommittee. The motion was seconded by Councilor Tim Moriarty and adopted with Councilor Tim Moriarty abstaining.

Before the motion was voted on, Councilor Tim Moriarty said he would be abstaining because he wasn't present at that meeting.

At this point, the motion was voted on.

4. DISCUSSION/ACTION:

a) Joint Meeting with the Economic Development Commission

Chairwoman Meg Casasanta said she had the pleasure of meeting with Chairwoman Marti Stiglich of the Economic Development Commission. Chairwoman Meg Casasanta said they would be talking about this Subcommittee having an official meeting with the Economic Development Commission and she asked Ray Carpentino if he knew where they stood with this. Ray Carpentino said he didn't know yet and he said he had to meet with the Economic

Development Commission next Tuesday. Chairwoman Meg Casasanta stressed again that it is kind of important for both this Subcommittee and the Economic Development Commission to formulate a Mission Statement so that they can move forward with the work that needs to be done.

Councilor Vargas asked Ray Carpentino if he could invite the Economic Development Commission next week to come to this Subcommittee's next meeting as opposed to this Subcommittee waiting for him to report back to them because then they will be out almost a summer. Ray Carpentino said he would do this. He told this Subcommittee that they meet a little early and he isn't sure if all of the Commissioners from the Economic Development Commission will be able to make it to the meeting for 5:00 p.m. but he said he would find out. Councilor Vargas said it would be good to have the invitation extended now and then they could work from there as opposed to them waiting. Councilor Moriarty mentioned about them doing this on an off night later and he said this would be fine with him because they will be into the budget in April so April, as well as May, are "shot". Chairwoman Meg Casasanta said they will be setting this up.

Chairwoman Meg Casasanta said she had attended the last meeting of the Economic Development Commission. She met with Chairwoman Marti Stiglich and Vice Chairman Mark Walworth after that meeting and they talked about going forward. Chairwoman Meg Casasanta said they agreed that getting the Plan of Conservation and Development would be key to moving forward both the agendas for this Subcommittee and for the Economic Development Commission. They are hoping that the new Chairperson of the Planning and Zoning Commission will also make this a priority as well so that they can get a better direction as to where the Town is going. She said they are overdue with that. She said another reason why they want to have a joint meeting between this Subcommittee and the Economic Development Commission is to formulate their own purpose and also for some activities going forward. They are looking forward to having this scheduled in the near future.

Chairwoman Meg Casasanta asked if there was any other discussion or any other comments with regards to this. Marti Stiglich said they are going to reestablish the Visitation Program. Each member of the Economic Development Commission will go out with either Ray Carpentino or the Town Manager to visit a minimum of one or two businesses every month. Marti Stiglich said they got a buy-in from everybody on the Economic Development Commission. She said in their conversation that she did invite Chairwoman Meg Casasanta and the members of this Subcommittee to join them in this endeavor if they want to be part of the Visitation Program. Marti Stiglich thinks it is very important for them to get a feel for themselves as to how the current businesses in Town feel about them. She said from having been on the Economic Development Commission for over two years that she had been on a working group which actually did meet with small groups of the business community and she has a pretty good handle as to what they are looking for. She would like to see confirmation in terms of diverse and different types of businesses in Rocky Hill. She thinks they are moving forward on this and she told Chairwoman Meg Casasanta that she thought she had agreed that she would bring this forward and ask her Subcommittee if they wanted to come onboard with the Economic Development Commission. Chairwoman Meg Casasanta said this is important. Marti Stiglich said they would be having their first meeting this week.

Chairwoman Meg Casasanta thanked Marti Stiglich and she said that she was going to mention the Visitation Program during another topic that would be coming up during this evening's meeting. Chairwoman Meg Casasanta referred to the importance of visiting businesses in Town in collaboration with the Town Manager and with Ray Carpentino. Chairwoman Meg Casasanta told the Councilors if they are interested in this then they will keep in communication with the Economic Development Commission. She told them after checking their schedules that they can join the Economic Development Commission if they make appointments. She believes that communication is important with the businesses that currently are in Rocky Hill. This is as important as having new businesses brought into Town. She thanked Marti Stiglich and she told her that she appreciated her bringing this up.

b) Committee purpose/activities

Nothing specific was talked about with regards to this at this time.

Chairwoman Meg Casasanta asked if there were any other topics for discussion this evening. There were none.

5. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

a) Ames

Ray Carpentino said nothing is happening at Ames or even at Walmart for that matter. There had been some discussion a couple of meetings ago about Ames and Walmart. He had contacted the owner of Ames about this and he had no idea what he was talking about. The owner of Ames wasn't contacted by Walmart and his realtor wasn't either. Ray Carpentino said he had also talked to the Regional Real Estate Director of Walmart and he indicated that there are no plans with regards to this. Chairwoman Meg Casasanta asked if the Regional Real Estate Director of Walmart had some explanation as to why the employees were saying that there was something going on there. Ray Carpentino said he hadn't gotten into that and he just deals with the real estate part of this. Chairwoman Meg Casasanta said very good.

b) Town Center West

Ray Carpentino said Richard Vicino, the developer for Town Center West, had come to the Redevelopment Agency meeting last week. Richard Vicino had discussed with that Agency some changes in the plan so that a residential element will be incorporated into the proposal. One reason for this is because the development as it stands now can't get approved by the State Department of Transportation Traffic Commission. Another reason is that the residential portion really drives the financing and it drives the retail component of a mixed use project like this. He said this has to go back to the Inland Wetlands Commission and the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Chairwoman Meg Casasanta asked Ray Carpentino if they are thinking that some of the traffic will be eliminated around there if a residential component is added to this project. Ray Carpentino said yes. Councilor Moriarty said this is a new thing out there and a lot of these

places are going to mixed use. He said that job security just isn't there. People want to buy a house but then they have to try to sell it five years later. He mentioned that everything is kind of going to mixed use.

c) Eco. Dev. Commission

Ray Carpentino said he thinks that Marti Stiglich had covered this. The Economic Development Commission had discussed the development of a Mission Statement. They are working on this currently and they will be discussing it at their meeting next week. Ray Carpentino said it will be very helpful when this Subcommittee and the Economic Development Commission meet in the near future.

The Economic Development Commission had provided a letter of support at their last meeting for the Cumberland Farms development on France Street and Rte. 3.

d) Pending Projects

i. Cumberland Farms

This was already discussed this evening.

ii. Old Main Village: New Britain Ave.: Daycare

Ray Carpentino said there is a proposal for a 10,500 square foot daycare center in another building that will be next to Romano's Pizza. This will be going before the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Inland Wetlands Commission. Councilor Moriarty asked if is correct that the developer had this once but that it is past the five year period. Ray Carpentino said the developer has to go back. Councilor Moriarty said the developer's permit has expired. Ray Carpentino said it has been over five years and he believes that the permit has expired. Councilor Moriarty said this was supposed to have continued and then the "bottom fell out". Councilor Vargas asked if this will be at the far end of that plaza. Ray Carpentino and Councilor Moriarty said yes. Councilor Moriarty said Romano's Pizza is there, along with a hair salon and training center. He said if this plaza is looked at then this will be to the right of it. Per the original plan, buildings were supposed to be continued all the way down to the end but the developer just built this as he was leasing it.

e) New requests for sites/buildings

Ray Carpentino said he has responded to a request for a 20,000 square foot industrial space building.

A specialty retail food business is looking to rent 2,500 square feet to 3,000 square feet.

There is an interest for medical lab space of 2,000 square feet to 3,000 square feet.

There is a request for a 65 acre site for a warehouse distribution facility, which will be approximately 250,000 square feet to 500,000 square feet.

Ray Carpentino said these requests are for the State of Connecticut or for the Hartford area and not just for Rocky Hill. These requests are also for a certain corridor along I-91.

There is also a request for 50,000+ square feet for a manufacturer of construction materials. Councilor Moriarty asked Ray Carpentino if he knew what type of construction material this would be. Ray Carpentino said this wouldn't be wood or metal.

Councilor Vargas asked Ray Carpentino if Rocky Hill was able to offer up sites for all of these requests. Ray Carpentino said he forwarded sites for all of these. Councilor Vargas asked Ray Carpentino if he will follow up on this or she asked him what the process is. Ray Carpentino said the process usually takes many months for most of these and he said that he follows this up. For the specialty retail food business, they are having an issue with price. They need certain requirements (i.e. a certain amount of visibility, etc.) and this would be very difficult in Rocky Hill. Rocky Hill may have one existing building with regards to industrial space for 20,000 square feet but he said they really don't have a place for manufacturing/industrial to build. Rocky Hill has a lot of medical lab space, especially at 1111 Cromwell Avenue (Compass Point). He explained that a medical facility had relocated to Wethersfield almost one year ago so 10,000 square feet is available there.

Chairwoman Meg Casasanta thanked Ray Carpentino. Chairwoman Meg Casasanta asked if there was any other discussion or questions. Councilor Moriarty said when he had been out of Town that he had read about how Pratt & Whitney is going to put some money into their facility in East Hartford and really expand over there. Pratt & Whitney will be staying there and he said that is a great thing. He asked if they should try to "jump into that" but then he said that the only problem is they won't get taxes on the equipment if they bring manufacturing in. He then said though that this could bring jobs to the community so maybe they can attract some companies and start manufacturing parts for them because most of the things are not done in-house, except for the assembly, etc. He referred to a place off of Dividend Road and he said he noticed that they do a lot of aircraft things there. Ray Carpentino said this is PDQ and they are going there tomorrow. He told Councilor Moriarty that they will definitely look into this.

Chairwoman Meg Casasanta said a lot of residential is being added to the community (i.e. the apartments on Brook Street and the apartments at Town Center West). She said that this will at least bring some people in to stay here in Rocky Hill. Ray Carpentino mentioned there are also two subdivisions. Chairwoman Meg Casasanta said that is a great opportunity as well.

Chairwoman Meg Casasanta asked if there were any other questions or discussion. There was none.

6. CORRESPONDENCE

Chairwoman Meg Casasanta asked Ray Carpentino if there was any correspondence this evening. Ray Carpentino said there was none.

7. ADJOURN

Councilor Tim Moriarty made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:14 p.m. The motion was seconded by Councilor Cathy Vargas and adopted unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Jo-Anne Booth
Recording Secretary